

KASHMIR FUMBLE?

CIA Questioned
On India PolicyBy HENRY S. BRADSHIER
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HONG KONG—Recent revelations about Central Intelligence Agency estimates on the India-Pakistan war raise curious questions.

How balanced are the sources of the CIA's information in a place like New Delhi? In other words, how vulnerable is the agency to one-sided rumors?

Some of the CIA estimates contained in the Anderson papers disclosed in Washington amount to rumors circulating in the Indian capital at the beginning of the war last month. They were rumors that well-informed Indian sources flatly denied at the time—and their denials seem to have been borne out by developments.

The CIA thought India was going to make an all-out attempt to smash the military power of West Pakistan and capture the Pakistani-held part of disputed Kashmir state, according to the Anderson papers. This was reported as an Indian goal after capturing East Pakistan, which is now Bangladesh.

Helms Quoted

Richard Helms, CIA director, is quoted as telling a Dec. 8 meeting of Washington's special action group on the India-Pakistan war:

"It is reported that prior to terminating the present hostilities, Mrs. (Indira) Gandhi (Indian Prime Minister) intends to attempt to eliminate Pakistan's armor and air force capabilities."

Helms and Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, thought India intended to seize the rest of Kashmir, the Himalayan state which India claims but Pakistan has held part of for a quarter-century.

The U.S. government's "tilt" toward Pakistan apparently was based on these assumptions of Indian intentions to try to smash West Pakistan into "an impotent state," as Kissinger put it.

But were those ever really the serious intentions of the people who controlled policy in New Delhi, rather than being simply the view of Indian hawks who did not make policy?

Interpretation

Report Cited

This correspondent reported from New Delhi Dec. 9, and The Star published Dec. 10, that "the best available indications are that India will want to bring the war to a speedy end once Bangladesh is cleared" of Pakistani troops.

The dispatch went on: "Indian military commanders have been itching for a chance to smash Pakistani tank and warplane strength in the West with major battles which they are confident of winning. But political control of the situation, heavily influenced by the Soviets, is against provoking big battles."

There was considerable Soviet pressure on India to hurry up and capture East Pakistan and then end the war. Both Moscow and New Delhi envisaged the capture "and then cease-fire on the Western front," that dispatch said.

India declared the cease-fire the day after Dacca fell.

The dispatch, and several others that repeated the same points as background to developments, was based on high-ranking informants in both the Indian government and Soviet mission in New Delhi.

What they said would happen is what happened, contrary to the Helms-Kissinger expectations. The question is what sort of sources the CIA was using.

Embassy Locked

One correspondent, even one with the kind of contacts built up by five years of reporting from New Delhi and almost as long from Moscow, cannot compete with the CIA's extensive system of sources for information. That other political source in New Delhi—the one that keeps its doors locked, as distinct

from the political section with an open-door policy—picks up all sorts of information.

Maybe the problem is evaluation. If the CIA hears Indian generals talking about smashing Pakistani military power, maybe it believes them rather than believing those quieter civilians who hold them back.

The armed forces in India never have been able to do as they pleased regardless of civilian politicians, unlike a number of other undeveloped countries and overdeveloped generals with which the CIA is a lot more familiar. And Mrs. Gandhi is not the personality to let her armed forces start such impudence, as anyone who has been in India long should know.

Weather Problems

As for India's trying to take Pakistani territory problems of winter weather and the logistical situation of the Indian army were involved.

Perhaps Helms and Kissinger had noted the Indian statement that India would no longer respect the old United Nations cease-fire line dividing Kashmir and they had made the heretic jump of logic—or, considering the geography, winter and logistics, illogic—to conclude that India wanted to capture everything beyond the line.

But in fact, as reported from New Delhi, India's ambitions were limited to clearing out some Pakistani army outposts that endangered Indian com-

The U.S. government has argued that its estimate was right and that only its efforts prevented the larger war which it foresaw. Thus, the dispatch of a naval task force built around the nuclear powered aircraft carrier Enterprise to the Bay of Bengal has been claimed in Washington to have had the effect of limiting India's war aims. And American influence in Moscow got the Soviets to restrain India according to claims.

Perhaps this will have to be marked down in the doubtful column on U.S. policy influence and results. Perhaps Washington more influential in limiting the South Asian war than it appeared from New Delhi.

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